MONTHLY BULLETIN
PENNSYLVANIA·DEPARTMENT·OF·WELFARE

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MAKING LAWS TO FIT OUR NEEDS

THE United States spent over 300 million dollars last year on organized relief. More than one in every five Pennsylvanians is receiving public aid. It is a situation which throws a sudden spotlight of national significance on methods of modern welfare work.

Social legislation introduced during the present session at Harrisburg reflects the opposite points of view of conflicting interests.

Some of the legislators have profited not at all by the bitter lessons of the depression and would repeat, perhaps with sinister intent the needless waste and inefficiency of earlier efforts.

Some of the bills introduced reflect an indiscriminate hysteria. Their drafters have partially grasped the idea Economy. They are unable to realize that for a going concern suddenly to cut down on all overhead and upkeep in essential departments spells not economy, but bankruptcy.

Fortunately numerous other bills reflect the reasoned findings of men and women who are experts in welfare work and whose experience is just now of especial value.

Because of limitations of space, we shall not undertake to mention all the measures approved by the Department of Welfare. Bills concerned with unemployment relief are excluded, because that subject has been variously treated in numerous recent Bulletins. We shall comment on a few of the major bills which the Department endorses wholly or in part. They illustrate principles to which modern public welfare policy stands committed.

The Department has long favored the county as the unit of social administration. House Bill 1396, introduced by Mr. W. A. Walker of Allegheny, provides for the organization of county departments of public welfare. A permissive bill, it would authorize the citizens of any county the privilege of adopting this plan if they decide that they want it.

It offers a practical answer to cries for Economy and lower taxes. Under this plan, county welfare would be administered by an unpaid board of public welfare appointed by the county commissioners. The commissioners would also appoint a salaried executive director "who shall have the qualifications in respect of training and experience which are prescribed for this position by the State Department of Welfare, and who shall be approved by the board." Such an organization would go far toward taking welfare work out of politics. Appointment to the Board would serve as recognition of distinguished citizenship.

Special merits of the bill are: 1, its recognition of the need of specialists, persons with technical training to take executive responsibility for public welfare work; and 2, its use of participation by laymen, those substantial citizens who have guided and strengthened private welfare work in the past and who have much to contribute to public welfare work in the future.

Such Boards of Public Welfare would look ahead to constructive and unified county plans, with frcedom to develop special services to fit the needs of the individual county. By contrast, poor directors under the present system are handicapped by many disabilities. Poor relief officials in Pennsylvania in the last two years have spent some 35 million dollars of the taxpayer's money on institutional care and outside relief. No business corporation would remain solvent if it tolerated the inefficiency of administration and inadequacy of records which characterize poor relief in many of our Pennsylvania counties. As a matter of policy, it is unsound to elect boards to perform technical administrative jobs.

The Department would suggest amending Bill 1396 to limit the power of the county commissioners. As it stands, they appoint a Board and then proceed to keep in their own hands many of the responsibilities which this Board should assume. To secure best results, powers of fixing policies and making appointmcnts should be largely delegated to the unpaid Board.

Senate Bill 638 introduced by Mr. Ziesenheim, offers progressive legislation for Erie County along related lines. It provides for the appointment of an expert as Director of Welfare for the county. Just as we expect qualified educators to head our schools, medical men to run our hospitals, so we are coming to demand that men and women with technical training and experience in welfare work shall have charge of public welfare.

House Bill 197, introduced by Mr. Jaffe of Philadelphia, would serve as a helpful preliminary to establishing an uniform state policy in the care of transients. It is primarily aimed to clear up vague points in the Poor Relief Act. It defines technical details as to what constitutes legal settlement. It codifies existing laws, abolishing those which are inconsistent.

Mr. Philip Sterling, of Philadelphia, introduced House Bill 452 which would transfer the Philadelphia Hospital for Mental Diseases at Byberry to the state. The Department endorses this bill as being in line with the policy of providing complete state care for the mentally ill. The state is better able to provide such care than the local community. It is most desirable to extend such care if necessary funds are available.

Similarly the Department approves of Senator Clark's Bill 430 which would transfer to the state the Chester County Hospital for the Insane at Embreeville. This would increase accommodations in the southeastern part of the state. Embreeville is accessible to Philadelphia, and could be used to help relieve the serious overcrowding at Byberry.

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EDITORIAL

By Alice F. Liveright, Secretary of Welfare

SO much has been said about House Bill 22 and its effect upon the Welfare Department, that one might be led to believe that the last word has been uttered.

There certainly are several words to be said concerning a statement recently released by the Department in which we commented upon the proposed economies of House Bill 22. "The proposed financial savings as far as the Department of Welfare is concerned are negligible as compared to the curtailment of essential services. The Department of Welfare is in favor of a cut of $13,600,000 below the budget for the present biennium. This will eliminate all new construction or filling of present vacancies on the staff. Any reduction below this appropriation, we believe, would seriously handicap the Department."

The need for haste and a statement may have given a false impression concerning the Department's interest in the continued building program for our State-owned institutions. On February 17, 1933, the Welfare Commission recommended "that the Commission approve a minimum building program." Unfortunately, it was impossible for the Governor to include in his budget even the amount covering such minimum needs. It was because of the necessity to live within the budget that the Welfare Department favored a minimum building program, making a virtue of necessity. But those of us who are in daily contact with our State institutions realize full well how urgent are the demands of our institutional development. These needs might be cited under seven headings.

1. The acute need for more beds for mental patients in the southeastern part of the State at Byberry as indicated by the overcrowded condition and the need for increased capacity at Norristown.

2. The need for means for better classification of mental patients in certain hospitals. The classification of mental patients is not effected for academic purposes but for the very real purpose of promoting quicker recoveries, and certain hospitals have waited years for buildings to house special types of patients.

3. The acute need for expansion of our institutions for the Feeble-minded. On December 1, the combined waiting list totalled 2360—Laurelton, 606; Pennhurst, 896; Polk, 858.

4. The need for the development of institution utilities, either because of deterioration or because of increased capacity.

5. The need for the correction of certain real fire hazards which would reduce the menace of overcrowding. The Department cannot ignore this tremendous responsibility.

6. The need for funds to complete work already begun is obvious, since moneys already spent are tied up and property partially completed is deteriorating.

7. The need to provide against the long-continued idleness of prisoners at institutions where development is necessary and enforced idleness a menace to institutional morale.

At the risk of boring our readers, I am compelled to repeat the tragic situation confronting our Commonwealth which makes it necessary to deprive our wards of every opportunity for wholesome custodial care.

MAKING LAWS

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Another bill relating to the Bureau of Mental Health is Senate Bill 569 introduced by Frank J. Harris of Allegheny, appropriating $500 to continue study and plans for the proposed Western State Psychiatric Hospital. This Hospital was authorized by the Assembly in 1931. The land, 65,000 square feet on one corner of the University of Pittsburgh campus, has been deeded to the state by the University. The architect has been appointed and the plans are drawn.

The Hospital would meet an urgent need for study and treatment of mental diseases in their earlier preventable stages and for other types of mental illness. It would also provide a needed training school for physicians and nurses specializing in the care of the insane. Temporary interruption of the state's construction program has postponed all new building. The small appropriation granted by this Bill would insure the state against the loss of valuable progress already made.

The Department endorses the bills introduced by Senator Harris of Allegheny relating to the Mothers' Assistance Fund. Senate Bill 84 is an appropriation bill representing the needs of families throughout the state. It is based on certified statements sent in by the Trustees of each county. Senate Bill 519 is an amendment. It simplifies certain administrative methods and would save time and increase efficiency. Senate Bill 70 proposes a constitutional amendment on behalf of the Fund. A similar bill was passed by the last legislature. If this bill passes, the voters will have an opportunity formally to endorse the principle of Mothers' assistance at the polls next autumn.

Mr. Gorman's House Bill 961 raises the age limit from 16 to 18 for children coming under the jurisdiction of juvenile courts. The Department favors this bill. Boys and girls of 16 and 17 who get into trouble need special supervision. Children in more fortunate homes are not turned out upon the world at 16. They are not considered mature enough to vote until they are 21. Adolescence is recognized as a time of special instability. In one county in the past year between six and seven hundred children of 16 and 17, many of them first offenders, were sentenced to the county jail mixed in with hardened criminals. Twenty-six of our states have already raised the age limit for juvenile courts to 18, and in five of these states it is raised to 21.

Senate Bill 246 codifies juvenile court procedure. In general the Department favors this bill, but would change certain details such as fixing the age limit at 16 and sending dependent and neglected children to the same institutions as delinquents, even though they are housed in separate cottages.

WHERE TO?

TRANSIENTS they are called. They are homeless wanderers, boys and girls, men and women. Sometimes families of five, seven, nine children with their parents are reported hitch hiking from place to place.

Five years ago many of them lived in typical American homes. We called them the backbone of our country. Since then, they have lost everything, first jobs, then cherished possessions, then their homes. Finally they are losing all self confidence and the ability to keep a job if they had one.

It is estimated that we as a people keep a million and a half of these homeless ones wearily moving from one inhospitable community to another. No one wants to be responsible for them, so the policy is either to run them out of town, or at best give them a night's lodging and hustle them on their way.

A National Committee on Care of Transient and Homeless held a nation wide census of transients late in March. It secured the cooperation of a dozen national organizations such as the Y's, Salvation Army and Travelers Aid to assist in making the count. Returns from this census are not yet complete.

A field worker from this committee, Mr. Morris Lewis, is making a survey of Pennsylvania conditions in railroad centers and cities on the national highways. He is making the rounds of police stations, flop houses, speakeasies, missions, jungles and other places where transients congregate. He is learning just what Pennsylvania does and leaves undone for these unfortunates. Mr. Lewis has as a basis for comparison his recent similar studies in Ohio and Michigan. So far he reports conditions as very bad.

Records show that the great majority of transients travel as of old, as unpaid guests of the railroads. Hitch hiking is approaching extinction. Hitch hikers have worn out their welcome with the motoring public. Major Lynn Adams of the Pennsylvania State Police directed his men to take a state census of all hitch hikers on the state highways on March 22. The state police turned in reports of 308 persons whom they questioned between 7 A. M. and 7. P. M. Nearly two thirds—191—were residents of the state. Only six of them were Negroes. More than three quarters—252—reported themselves as unmarried and unemployed. Fourteen girls and women were among the number.

In contrast to these low figures for hitch hikers, Mr. G. W. Buzby, Superintendent of Police for the Pennsylvania Railroad, gives startling figures on the increase in arrests for stealing rides on trains. These figures cover only the short run of 50 odd miles between Harrisburg and Altoona.

	Year	*Arrests*
	1928	678
	1929	521
	1930	1,026
	1931	2,143
First six months	1932	1,439
Second six months	1932	10,467

Mr. Buzby's records show that the ages of this group were: 18 and under, 12%; 18 to 25 years, 40%; 25 to 35 years, 28%; between 35 and 50 years, 17%; and over 50, 3%. Mr. Buzby says that there are today more boys and young men between 16 and 25 on the road than ever before, "and our officers advise that in many cases these boys or young men apparently come from good families." He says the problem has reached such proportions that

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DEFEND STATE USE

THE National Committee on Prisons and Prison Labor, through its President, George Gordon Battle, Esq., has offered to Solicitor-General Henry Epstein of New York State the assistance of the Committee in meeting the attack on the constitutionality of the New York State law which provides that after January 19, 1934, prison-made products from other states may not be sold on the open market in New York State.

The attack on the New York State law has been brought by Harry Greenthal of New York City, a contractor for prison-made products from other states, in the form of an injunction action to test the constitutionality of the National Hawes-Cooper Act and all supporting legislation passed by state legislatures.

This will affect Pennsylvania as Act No. 308, P. L. 922 of the 1931 Legislative Session was adopted by the Legislature and approved June 23, 1931. This Pennsylvania law applies the provisions of the National Hawes-Cooper Act to this State. It will be interesting to see what result comes from the action in New York State because of its effect on Pennsylvania.

Since 1883 Pennsylvania has prohibited contract labor in all prison industries and these shops have been operated on the State Use system. Unfortunately, however, products made in the prisons of Maryland, West Virginia, and other States where contractors have operated prison shops, have been sold on the open market in Pennsylvania. This has been unfair to free industry and free labor in this Commonwealth. Pennsylvania was the first State to take advantage of the National Hawes-Cooper Act which permits a State to pass legislation making the State law apply, not only to prison-made goods produced in the State, but to goods manufactured in prisons of other States and shipped into this State.

ON TO DETROIT

SOCIAL workers from all over the country will gather in Detroit June 11 to 17 for the sixtieth annual meeting of the National Conference of Social Work and Associate Groups.

The program offers an overwhelming variety of stimuli. With characteristic energy the committee has packed a total of 300 meetings into one week. Mornings are devoted to Division meetings and the twelve Divisions listed cover the main headings of modern social work. They are: Children; Delinquents and Correction; Health; The Family; Industrial and Economic Problems; Neighborhood and Community Life; Mental Hygiene; Organization of Social Forces; Administration of Public Social Work; The Immigrant; Professional Standards and Education; Educational Publicity. There is also a committee on the American Indian.

The list of participating organizations is almost as long as the program itself. The April issue of the Conference Bulletin will give you both and much other information. It may be had by writing—or wiring, the prospectus adds hopefully to:

National Conference of Social Work, Howard R. Knight, General Secretary, 82 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio, or

Detroit Committee on Arrangements, Earle Parker, Secretary, 51 West Warren Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

AN ANALYSIS OF 8 STATE WELFARE DEPARTMENTS

By Mary Frazier Meade

THE following discussion of State Departments of Welfare does not consider them at all from the standpoint of organization, in which states performing similar functions may differ very widely; but only with the question in mind of what type of services are rendered to what classes of handicapped and dependent persons.

There are three divisions into which these eight states roughly fall. The first is that of a highly centralized department concentrating on the actual administration of institutional and field work, along many lines, but of necessity not exhaustive. The second is rather rudimentary in the sense of being more restricted. The third is that of a department limiting its field, and operating by setting and maintaining standards, and supervising the actual administrative work, which is chiefly carried out by unified local units.

The first class including Illinois and Minnesota functions briefly in the following way: The Illinois Department of Social Welfare administers all state correctional institutions through divisions including a Criminologist, a Board of Prison Industries, both a Board and a Superintendent of Paroles; all state institutions for the insane and feeble-minded, including a psychiatric hospital. The division of Visitation of Children administers state institutions for dependent and crippled children, licenses local maternity homes, boarding homes and orphanages, and supervises the care of state wards outside of institutions as well. In the field of general relief there is no administration or supervision of work for the aged; but the Department carries on work for special classes of handicapped by administering a school for the deaf, one for the blind, an industrial school and a visitation service for the latter. It administers, as well, two veterans' homes and one for veterans' children.

Minnesota differs from Illinois in that its Board of Control includes no division of corrections, except for the administration of reformatories; does include administration and supervision of tuberculosis sanitoria; but chiefly through making an effort by appointing local County Welfare Boards for the care of children, to establish stronger county units for placement and the administration of Mother's Aid. Here again there is no real provision for the aged, though both states carry on research chiefly in the field of Mental Hygiene.

The second class, which I call in no derogatory sense rudimentary, includes West Virginia and Delaware where the functions of the State Department of Welfare are very limited, and service to all handicapped classes is still very decentralized. In Delaware the Department of Welfare only visits state and state-aided institutions, supervises the administration of the sterilization law, and enforces the law regarding the "*importation* and supervision of dependent children." In West Virginia, however, the department of Welfare takes full responsibility for children, the placement and care of dependent children, both in and out of institutions, and the care and education of crippled children, both in institutions and at home. But aside from this it has only a bureau of assistance to veterans.

North Carolina approaches the third type in its emphasis on developing county units. The department of Welfare has the power of visitation and inspection of all institutions, (state), correctional and for the insane and feeble-minded, it administers the sterilization law, conducts clinics for mental diseases, and collects crime statistics. While it cares for children committed to it by court, it places out only such as are not eligible for institutional care; it supervises all county institutions, including homes for the aged. But especially note worthy is a separate division devoted solely to the organization and promotion of county welfare departments.

Massachusetts and New York represent the fullest development of the third type which limits the department of Welfare, eliminating departments of correction and Mental Diseases, remaining largely advisory and supervisory in their functions but working through well unified systems of county, (N. Y.), or township, (Mass.), departments of Public Welfare. The result is a very inclusive system covering all dependents at home or in institutions, state, county, private, and the supervision of all charitable institutions and agencies of any sort whatever.

New Jersey bridges the gap between the two, having more recently developed unified local work, and carrying on through divisions of classification and education, parole and domestic relations, medicine, a rehabilitation commission, a program by specialization of function for the rehabilitation of handicapped classes.

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the railroad police have had to abandon their traditional policy of arresting trespassers on railroad property. They were arresting them in such numbers that the authorities of the various counties "on account of their financial conditions * * * requested we discontinue committing these transients to jail."

One of the surprising facts about transients is that most of them—as high as 75 and 80 per cent, investigation shows—are natives of the state where they wander. Of the remainder, a majority come from bordering states. It is the boy of exceptional thirst for adventure who treks from coast to coast. Most of them keep within a radius of 500 miles. Like squirrels in a cage, desperately draggled and pathetic squirrels, they keep going round and round in a big circle, stopping at the shelters and hangouts where they have been treated least badly on earlier rounds.

An early number of the Bulletin will be devoted to the findings of the present investigation and a proposed program for care of transients.

WHY CRIME?

WHY do men and women commit crimes? Students of criminology turn to the records of our courts and prisons. Analysis of the circumstances of several thousand similar crimes has vastly more significance than the study of ten or a hundred cases. During the last decade there has been great progress in putting criminal statistics on a uniform basis.

The first step was to define types of crime. A standard classification of offenses has been agreed upon by the Bureau of the Census and the Department of Justice.

The Bureau of the Census will publish yearly data from criminal courts. It will supply standard forms making the information uniform and comparable. Much study has been given to the preparation of simple forms which can be filled out with a minimum of time and energy.

By cooperating, Pennsylvania will be able to compare its criminal records with those of states all over the country, thus multiplying their value many times over.